

BRODY—Alter. Died September
23, 1981. Poet, playwright, es-
sayist. Survived by son, Daniel
and granddaughter Nina.
RICHMOND

Dear Daniel,

I asked

Henry to give you
his copy of Alter's
book of poems, the
Family Album - I
don't know if he will -
he is not inclined
to give up things even
if he hasn't looked at it
for years - Love
C

Dear Daniel,

I was clearing
out some things and came
across these 4 issues of a
magazine that your father,
Henry Goodman, and their
friend Dr Isaac Kibonoh put
out - twenty years before you
were born.

I wanted you to have

them - when I first knew
After this is the way he
was writing - at that time
fewer poems and more prose,
mostly political & literary
reviews - This was the
best part of him - and
You should know it -
and Alice too.
Love

Your mother

Dear Daniel,

About Alter's
essays + poems - some of
the themes I remember his
talking about many years
ago - The poem about the
Germ. is a shorter version
of a very long epic poem
he had written a very long
time ago - As writing and
as thinking, almost
anything he writes has
originality of thinking
expression & style - of
course there is a very
great variation in the
quality - some of a very

primal + some very sophis-
ticated - The primal things
have an admixture of deep
authenticity and some of his
pathology - as in the pre-
occupation and extremes
of depiction about women -
Like all schizophrenics,
his original + primal union
with his mother was not
long or satisfying enough & it
never dissolved into the forms
of a gradual separateness or
individuation. Therefore
the woman in the guise of
Mother Nature is worshipped,
adored, & endowed with the
powers of life, procreating

a nurturing life - but then
the themes of uncaring, and
abandonment began to
emerge & the horror is a
monstrous being - destroy-
ing other offspring with
whom she has no connection
(no human connection) and
who are discarded -

When Alter was about 6
months old his father
left for America - his
mother had 4 children
to take care of & support -
she left him to go & think
of he was put in charge of
his sister who was 10 or
11 & of course no mother
substitute. - It may also
be that his mother was

not merely burdened as
happens in many cases
which affect the very
young infant & child
particularly as they have
not yet developed their
own personal core - even
a primitive self hood, but
she may have been so
anxious & depressed that
she was incapable of relat-
ing to him & he was sud-
denly, so to speak, discarded.
He once told me that as a
toddler, just having
learned to walk, he walked
from his home by himself &
when she was nursing &
demanded that she breast

feed him! Even if this did not
occur & is only a fantasy.
Its significance remains the
same -

Madness & the potential
for madness is always the
same - that is, the human
being whose core is fragile
and who does not have at
least one other human
being (only one is indispensable)
by whom he feels saved for
for his own sake & no other
reason, ~~and~~ experience which
gives him a sense of trust
and hope and enables him
to be connected with his
own feelings & needs,
his own mind, and body

is simply unable to
cope with the essential
loneliness that such
an existential situation
creates -

Anyway, my dear, your
response to his peculiar
way of reaching out is
to me very beautiful
and I both love you the
more for it and appreciate
the kind of person into
which you have evolved.

All my love,
Your mother